



24-Hour Helpline: 1.800.863.9909

PO Box 653, Bangor, ME 04402

partnersforpeaceme.org

Testimony of Amanda Cost
In Support of LD 2084, An Act to Provide Funding for Essential Services for Victims of
Crime
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
January 11, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Amanda Cost, and I am writing on behalf of Partners for Peace in support of LD 2084 and the need for funding to maintain essential victim services in Maine.

Last year, Partners for Peace celebrated its 50th year providing services in our communities. In Fiscal Year 2023, our Advocates helped 1,942 survivors of domestic violence, the highest number of people in our recorded history. With the looming shortfalls in the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) for 2025, we are pleading the Maine Legislature for funds to maintain our core services for survivors of domestic violence.

We, along with the other Domestic Violence Resource Centers in the state, rely on this funding to support our outreach and advocacy efforts for victims of domestic abuse who are engaged in the civil and criminal justice systems. This funding also supports our ability to make call backs to survivors who have been named as victims in recent police reports involving domestic violence crimes. The elimination of these services would result in the loss of **3 full-time advocate positions** and create gaps in immediate safety planning support for survivors in our region and across the state.

Helping victims navigate the justice systems is a service that is in high demand in our region. If these cuts become a reality in Fiscal Year 2025, there will be devastating consequences for our partnerships with local law enforcement and District Attorney's offices. We will no longer be able to prioritize staffing to convene regional Domestic Violence Task Force meetings, respond to law enforcement requests for consultation and safety planning, or engage with our DA's office on individual cases or systemic response.

The Advocates that respond to these requests are uniquely trained and experienced in this type of safety planning and navigating the justice system. We are concerned that without designated funds to allocate to this work, it would be impossible to continue to staff the work at the level that is required to meet the complex needs of survivors.

Working to end domestic violence in Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties since 1973

Partners for Peace is funded in part by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, MaineHousing, Heart of Maine United Way, and your generous donations.



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Significant cuts to the liberating and lifesaving services to victims of domestic abuse will happen, in our region, if LD 2084 is not passed.

I urge you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 2084 to ensure high quality support for survivors domestic violence remains available to Mainers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amanda S. Cost'.

Amanda S. Cost, Executive Director

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